

SPEECH OF C. M. CLAY, OF FAYETTE,

In the House of Representatives of Kentucky, January, 1841, upon the bill to repeal the law of 1835, "to prohibit the importation of slaves into this state." The House being in committee of the whole—Mr. Clay having the floor, said :

Mr. Chairman:—The result of your deliberations upon this bill must affect the destiny of this State, and perhaps that of the Union itself. Pamphlets and speeches have gone forth among the whole people, and all the leading journals of the State have taken ground upon one side or the other. If I were pleading my own cause only, however much I might hazard in the result, I should ask your attention with diffidence ; but I stand up here in behalf of a whole people—your State, yourself, and your posterity, are so nearly concerned as to demand a patient hearing and a deliberate determination.

The gentleman from Breckenridge* and the gentleman from Louisville have done me the honor to allude to me personally, and the late canvass in my county, and although they have done so in a manner most complimentary to myself, yet, to me, it is a source of regret, because my opponents are not here to answer what I may have to say. I shall, therefore, speak of them in no other terms than those of scrupulous respect. The influences which were arrayed against me were indeed great : a young man (in intellect at least my equal) with all the advantages of wealth and thorough education, in the county of his nativity, and among the associates of his childhood and youth, the son of an old politician, who had done some service to the Commonwealth, and whose legal attainments at all events had no small consideration in the public estimation, was my opponent. I, on the contrary, was a new-comer. If I bore with me any reputation for ability, it must have been of necessity but little, whilst, if I had any social qualities worthy of consideration, my limited associations barred their influence. It was then the policy and justice of the cause I advocated, which, in a county of ten thousand slaves, sustained me triumphantly. The discussion of this subject is deprecated *here*—so it was deprecated *there*—and by whom in both cases ? By those who will not rest whilst this law stands ; who

would claim a judgment against us by default ; who, by bitter denunciation would drive us from our integrity ; they beg the question, and ask us to be silent ; they have demanded the repeal of this law for three years ; at every stage the law has rapidly gained friends, and yet they dare tell us that the people require its repeal. Epithets strike no terrors into my spirit ; denunciation shall not silence me. It has been said, that money is power, that knowledge is power, but more powerful than both these combined is truth. Let me ever worship at her shrine—she is the high priestess of republican liberty. Let my voice be lifted up for ever in her cause.* Shall the slaves of our state be increased ? If slavery is a blessing, by all means repeal this law ; but if it be an evil, as I hold, as held Jefferson and Henry and Madison, and all the illustrious statesmen of the world from 1776 to the present day, then you dare not touch that law which stands like a wall of adamant, shielding our homes, and all that makes that name most sacred, from more than all the calamities that ever Barbarian invaders inflicted upon a conquered people. The gentleman from Breckenridge avows slavery to be a "blessing," and undertakes, by scripture, to hallow it with the sanction of Deity. This is a strange doctrine to be heard in any country, but to urge it here, among Kentuckians, and in this assembly, is not only strange, but monstrous. I cannot assent to the argument. I oppose it up-

* "He, therefore, who retards the progress of intellect, countenances crime ; nay, to a State, is the greatest of criminals. Nor let us believe, with the dupes of a shallow policy, that there exists upon the whole earth one prejudice that can be called salutary, or one error beneficial to perpetuate." "It is the petty, not the enlarged mind which prefers casuistry to conviction ; it is the confined and short sight of ignorance, which, unable to comprehend the great bearings of truth, pries only into its narrow and obscure corners, occupying itself in scrutinizing the atoms of a part, which the eagle eye of wisdom contemplates in its widest scale, the luminous majesty of the whole."—*Bulwer*

* *Mr. Calhoun*—*Mr. Towles*, of Henderson, the mover of the bill, was not heard by the author.

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on every principle of truth and expediency, now and for ever; it saps the foundation of human liberty.—If you sanction it now, where and to what shall I appeal, when the sword and the purple are arrayed against me? No, let not gentlemen in their blind zeal to make slavery here "*perpetual*," cleave down the banner under which our forefathers fought and triumphed, the barrier against the oppressors of all lands, "that all men are born free and equal." The divine right of kings has fallen before the advance of civilization; the most loyal and despotic sticklers for royalty now speak only of the *historical* right of princes to rule. Can it be that this doctrine shall have fallen only to give place to its more monstrous counterpart—the divine right of slavery? I understand our religion to leave the form of government, and the municipal institutions of nations untouched; nay, sir, the Saviour of men disclaimed the right of interference—"give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's"—was his doctrine; it is also my doctrine. I am no reformer of governments. I leave slavery where I found it; 'tis not a matter of conscience with me; I press it not upon the consciences of others—"let him who formed the heart, judge of it alone." I admit, with the gentleman, the antiquity of slavery; that it has existed from time immemorial to the present day; yet, sir, in all that time, I find nothing to recommend it as a source of power, of glory, or of humanity. Its first mention is in Genesis, where Isaac subjects Esau to Jacob. Esau rose up to slay his brother, and Jacob was forced to fly from his country. Evil, in the beginning, as it is now. The Jews were enslaved by Pharaoh in Egypt; what again were the consequences? In the metaphorical language of the historian, unheard of plagues came upon the Egyptians, which were terminated only by the entire destruction of Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea. Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Jews led captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and held in bondage in the Assyrian empire. What was the result—glory and dominion and safety? No, sir; these slaves were the cause of the destruction of Babylon, and the utter ruin of the empire. The inspired writers imputed the destruction to the oppression of the Jews; the profane agree in the result; whilst it requires no great sagacity to discover that slavery, through natural means alone, was commensurate as a cause to the result. 'Tis true that Darius or Cyaxerxes and Cyrus the Persian, turned aside the Euphrates and entered through the dry channel, beneath the walls, with their army; but it was by treachery only that he could pass the massive gates which barred the entrance from the river through the streets to the place. The hand writing upon the wall was Hebrew; Daniel, the

Hebrew, alone could read and interpret it to the doomed Belshazzar. Effeminacy and luxury had caused the Hebrew slave to rule over that once powerful and glorious nation; they were betrayed in the midst of revelry and self-confidence; they were destroyed in a night; and Daniel, the slave and the Jew, was made vice regent, under Cyrus, over all the shattered provinces. Thus passed away for ever the most splendid city that the world has seen, most impotently, without a struggle, leaving no vestige behind. I am gravely told, that in those countries of antiquity, where slavery existed, the human intellect reached its highest development; yet did slavery exist among all nations at that time. How happened it that a cause so general produced effects so limited? No, sir; the Grecian and Roman States were glorious in spite of slavery. The ancient historians say but little upon the subject of slavery; perhaps they thought (as some do now) that nothing should be said on the subject of so great a "blessing;" yet, whenever we do hear of it, desolation marked its progress, mentioned only in connection with the evils of its sufferance. Plutarch and Thucydides tell us that, during the reign of Archidamus, an earthquake threw Mount Taygetus upon the city of Sparta, and destroyed it. Their slaves, the Helots, those natural enemies of the master, immediately rose up and set upon the Lacedemonians; and this proud people were forced to call in their rivals, the Athenians, to protect them from domestic violence. We may judge of the prolonged desolation of the war, when we are told, that Ithome was besieged for ten years before it was taken. We may estimate the effects of slavery upon the moral sensibilities of that people, when we are informed that 2,000 slaves were massacred in a single night; and yet the perpetrators of the deed escaped prosecution, the whole community winking at the offence. The servile wars in the Roman Empire are too well known to be dwelt upon. Slavery there certainly formed no element of strength or greatness. If the slaves who cultivated the soil had been free Roman citizens (a check upon the enervated and luxurious city population) Caesar might not have been the master of the world, and Rome might have yet been free. Has slavery in modern times been the foundation of greatness and civilization? Why, then, have Asia and Africa been subject to non-slaveholding Europe; and why has South America, with all her slaves, rested stationary in barbarism, whilst North America, under a different policy, has risen up the first among the civilized nations? Modern slavery, more marked and distinctive in its character than ancient, is so much the more terrible in its consequences. Formerly, the color being the same,

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'twas easy to merge the slave into the freedman, and the freedman into the citizen; but now the difference of color is an eternal badge of servitude and infamy—an impassible barrier between the two races. The massacre of St. Domingo, and the insurrection of Southampton, speak they of "blessings" of peace, of glory, and power! The most overweening self-delusion cannot be deaf to the despairing energy with which all history cries aloud and swears that Deity has not designed that slavery shall be the necessary foundation of "liberty" and civilization! If the Old Testament seemed to sanction the institution of slavery, (and I might ask, what phasis of human action under the sun did it not sanction?) there is nothing, surely, in the Christian religion which regards slavery with eyes of peculiar approbation. Those precepts upon which are said to "rest the laws and the prophets," certainly are not the foundations upon which involuntary slavery can intrench itself. The Virginia statute of 1753 first making slaves, excepted Moors and Turks in alliance with the British King, and Christians and persons once free in a Christian land. Thus, it seems, that the founders of slavery in America so far regarded the Christian religion at war with slavery, that, in whatever land its immortal banner was raised, it was the shield of the weak and the oppressed, the palladium of eternal liberty to the vilest wretch who could clothe himself in the inviolable panoply of the Christian name.

I have thus been compelled to answer, reluctantly, some of the arguments in favor of the divine right of slavery: reluctantly, because I deprecate this attempt to treat this subject as a matter of conscience, whilst at the same time, I cannot silently acquiesce in this wresting the religion, of all others among men inculcating freedom and equality, to the unnatural sanction of the most despotic of all known governments—that of master and involuntary servitude.

Christianity, then, seems to have been the foundation of the anti-slavery movement; next was the spirit of the American Revolution.—One of the alleged grounds of the rebellion was the importing of slaves into the colonies against their consent. In 1778, two years after the Declaration of Independence, Virginia imposed a penalty of 1,000*l.* and the forfeiture of the slave, upon the importer of any slave into that Commonwealth. The act of 1785 makes some amendments to that of '78. The act of 1794 modifies the above acts, and introduces a clause of emancipation. The act of 1798 again modifies and carries out the prohibitory clause of the Constitution

against foreign importation. The act of 1815 imposes the penalty of \$600 upon importation and the oath. The law of 1832-3 but does the same. Thus, from 1778 to the present time, has a law similar to this, with the same oath in all, been upon the statute book of our country. Such has been the policy of the slave States from the Revolution to the present time. All the original States, save Massachusetts, were slave states. Through the silent and safe operation of laws like this, slavery has gone south of Mason's and Dixon's line. All of the slave States have had laws similar to this. The importation of slaves is forbidden, to a certain extent, by the constitution of Mississippi. Georgia makes the domestic slave-trade felony—a penitentiary offence. The United States, since 1808, have made the foreign slave-trade piracy; so also have Great Britain, Holland, and France. Although the African be a slave at home, yet is the slave trade punished with death. Well may gentlemen become the apologists of the slave-trade who advocate the repeal of this law.

Having thus attempted to repel the divine right of slavery, and prove that this law, so far from being an innovation, and contrary to precedent, is in accordance with the settled policy of all our eminent men, from Washington, Jefferson, and Henry, down to the present time—that it is in unison with the Christian religion, and the advance of civilization and the irresistible moral sentiment of mankind—I shall now attempt to vindicate its constitutionality.

Shall the law of 1832-3 be repealed? Shall I not, says the opponent of this law, be allowed to bring in a slave for my own use, if I want? He might also ask, shall I not be allowed to bring in a slave from Africa also? Yet the laws of the United States impose the penalty of death upon the foreign slave-trader, and the domestic slave-traders become, in the eyes of some, very highly respectable gentlemen, who dare denounce the native sons of Kentucky as abolitionists, and enemies of the country, who oppose the same traffic which united America has forbidden with death. And, while the President of the United States of America is calling upon Congress to break up, more effectually, the trade in African slaves, they are demanding no less earnestly that this State shall be desecrated, and impoverished, and brutalized, by an overflow of the slough of slavery from all the jails of the South, to gratify the rapacity and avarice of those lovely specimens of human philanthropy—the professional slave traders. This indignation at restraint comes with a bad grace from those whose freedom consists in trampling with an iron heel upon the human will. Laws are made for short-sighted selfishness; to bend the

* See Governor McDuffie's inaugural address, and Mr. Wickliffe's speech on the law of 1832-3.

wayward impulses of the individual mind to subservience to the public good. The gentleman from Breckenridge tells us, that all men are governed by self-interest; and, disguise it as we may, selfishness lies at the bottom of all our actions; that I, the representative of a county with 10,000 slaves, favor this law because it makes them valuable to the slaveholder; but that the gentleman from Louisville is for the law, because they there have "*white slaves*" who are cheaper than blacks. I confess that I am moved by self-interest; but there are two kinds of interest—the one, a narrow, short-sighted, unstatesman-like self-interest, which looks only to immediate consequences—it subserves the passion and the appetite—it is the foundation of all mental, and moral, and physical debasement—it is the instigator of crime, and its end is death. But there is another, enlarged and far seeing and statesman-like self-interest—which looks not only to immediate but secondary and remote consequences—it yields not to impulse, nor to passion, but is subservient to reason—it becomes the groundwork of virtue, wisdom, and immortality. In private life, 'tis the essence of morality, in the public man it is true patriotism. Fortunately, however, for Fayette, it is not necessary to draw these nice distinctions; both interests impel her with concentrated force to sustain the law of 1833; for as the owner of 10,026 slaves, valued at \$3,743,123, is there any slaveholder so blind as not to see that the free importation of slaves reduces, by all the laws of trade, the value of her slave population in proportion to the increase and supply from abroad? While on the other hand, the far reaching eye of enlightened patriotism will discover in the increase of the whites, over the slaves, security and wealth, and progressive greatness to the whole State. Again: if you draw the line between the slave and the non-slaveholder, as some recklessly do, you again find that all the interests of both parties unite once more in sustaining the law. For if, by the law, the value of slave labor is increased; so also by the same law, is the value of white labor increased; for all experience shows that the price of black regulates the price of white labor: And it is added that nine-tenths of the free white population of Kentucky are non-slaveholders, or working men, will they ever be so infatuated and blind as to lower the price of labor and starve their own families, to "diffuse the slave population over all the slave States," that southern nabobs may sleep in security, while their own little innocents may cry for bread; or sink into that other sleep, never again to wake?—It is the interest of all Kentucky, then, to diminish the number of slaves. Let us see if the law of '33 has the desired effect.

TABLE No. 1, showing the number of Whites and Blacks in Kentucky.

CENSUS.	Whites.	Slaves and free blacks.	Blacks to Whites.
1790	61,133	11,944	1 to 5.11
1800	179,871	41,084	1 " 4.37
1810	324,237	82,274	1 " 3.94
1820	434,644	129,637	1 " 3.35
1830	517,787	170,130	1 " 3.04
1840	587,016	190,342*	1 " 3.06

Absolute increase of whites and blacks in the last ten years from '30 to 1840, 69,230 20,212 1 to 3.40

Thus, from the admission of Kentucky into the Union, down to 1830, the slave population rapidly increased, as shown by the census, upon the whites—but since 1830, by the passage of the law, the whites have rapidly increased upon the blacks—making the absolute increase in ten years of 3.40 whites to 1 black.

TABLE No. 2, showing the increase of the whites and the combined free colored and slave population in the slave States, in 40 years, from 1790 to 1830, Florida omitted.

STATES.	From 1790 to 1830.	Blacks increase per cent.	Whites increase per cent.
Maryland,†	1790	40.3794	39.5204
Virginia, "		98.8820	57.0406
N. Carolina, "		151.2094	61.0654
S. Carolina, "		196.9117	338.8112
Georgia, "		641.7470	461.2185
□ Kentucky, "		1324.3972	746.9844
Tennessee, "		3768.6607	1573.5264
Mississippi, 1800		1702.7241	1260.1661
Louisiana, 1810		198.9656	160.6773
Missouri, "		609.2316	566.3667
Alabama, 1820		147.7971	97.8347
Arkansas, "		178.4533	104.0432
D. of C., 1800		204.7183	173.8228
Total increase per cent. in forty years,		207.4671	260.0080
Total increase in the U. S. per cent.		207.4671	232.1512

By reference to the statistics in the pamphlet on your desk, and the table (marked No. 2) here in my possession, you will find

*The Auditor's Report makes about 18,000 less.

†Owing to emancipation, the decrease of Maryland's slave population in 40 years, was 0.0480 per centum.

—Review of R. Wickliffe's speech, &c., by C. M. Clay, 1840.

that in the slave States the increase of the black, upon the white population, has been slow but progressive—whilst in the United States, the whites have increased upon the blacks, from 1790 to 1830, the whites increasing at the rate of 232.15 per centum, and the blacks increasing at the rate of 187.87 per centum. Which shows, conclusively, that in the free States, the whites increase in a greater ratio upon the same basis, than they do in the slave States, or that slavery is a draw-back upon population; or else it shows, that if the whites propagate as fast in a slave as a free State, that emigration is greater, or immigration less; in either case the slave State is the loser. If a free white population, then, be an element of wealth and greatness, surely the law of '33 should stand. As a white population is not only the foundation of wealth and military strength, but of representative power in the United States, the contrast between a slave and free State cannot fail to strike forcibly the most unthinking.* Kentucky has the advantage over Ohio in age, and perhaps in natural resources—such as richness of soil, mineral wealth, climate, &c., yet, by the census of 1840, Kentucky has a total of 777,359 inhabitants, (increasing in ten years at the rate of 33 per centum,) whilst Ohio has, in 1840, 1,514,695, (having increased at the rate of 62.50 per centum in the same ten years,) having now a population greater than Virginia, even—(1,210,272.) And whilst South Carolina has increased her whole population in ten years 2 per cent., Massachusetts, of about the same age and natural advantages, has increased 21 per cent. in the same time. What statesman can look at these facts, and yet vote to repeal this law? Who that has the pride of a Kentuckian, would not rather wish that this law had been a part of the constitution itself?

The gentleman from Breckenridge has spoken of the lower classes of New England as being "slaves—worse than slaves," and because we have alluded to the genius of that people as developed in literature, and especially in the useful sciences and mechanic arts, we are taunted as being allied in feeling to "Yankees." Since the ever memorable reply of Daniel Webster to the South Carolinian, on Foote's resolutions, I had supposed that no one would venture to deride the name of "Yankee." They need no defence at my hands—I shall make none. I am a Kentuckian, of the Virginian descent. I have not been taught to consider praise given to another, as so much detraction from myself; nor have I thought it necessary to establish my claims to the honor of being of the true blood, that I should despise and

abuse all the world besides. It is the part of friendship to supply defects, and to correct errors: because I am proud of my State and love her renown, I call upon her, by all the triumphs of the past, to seek the true road to permanent happiness and ultimate glory.

[Mr. Clay here read from a newspaper an extract, showing that there had been orders from all parts of the world for various kinds of American machinery—grist mills for Holland; steam cars for England; steam vessels for Russia; cotton gins for India, &c. &c.]

I would now ask the advocates of slave labour, how long shall we wait till we shall be able to supply Europe with such specimens of manufacture and artistical ingenuity? How long before Holland will send to Kentucky for grist mills? How long before the eyes of the gentleman from Breckenridge shall glow at the sight of such rail-road steam cars, of Kentucky make, as Philadelphia has lately had the honor of shipping for the admiration of other lands? How long before we shall here see such a steam ship as lately floated in the harbors of New York, for the emperor of Russia?—We have waited for two hundred years to see these things; but alas! we have not seen them. How many hundred years longer shall our hearts fail with the sickness of hope deferred, before we shall partake of the triumph of these creations of "Yankee" genius? Like the doomed Jew, we wander on in darkness and sullen expectancy, clinging with desperate fondness to the cast off idols of days that are gone, unconscious of the heavenly light which surrounds us, and the Deity that moves in our midst! Have we succeeded better in literary eminence? I might ask of the South, as the British reviewer of America, who reads a southern book? Where are our Irvings and Coopers? Where our Percivals and Hallecks? Where our Sillimans and Hares, and Fultons and Franklins? Our very presses and paper and printers even, are of Yankee manufacture. 'Tis true in the departments of law and politics—those ever tense and exciting professions—those hot beds of intellect, we have produced some splendid specimens of mental development, but they only make us the more deeply regret that so much mind should lie forever dormant, perishing in the embryo, or sunk in the stagnant pools of luxury and indolence which slavery spreads far around like the fabled Stygian lake—an eternal barrier between its doomed spirits and a higher Heaven? And shall I, then, be taunted with Yankee feeling, because I would dispel the deep lethargy which rests upon our loved Kentucky? Shall I speak of her triumphs upon every battle field, from Lake Erie to the Gulf of Mexico? Shall I tell of her characteristic eloquence which, whether heard in rude accents on the stump, or more polish-

* See letters, &c., by T. F. Marshall, pages 28-9, 1840.

ed phrase in halls of national legislation, fears no rivalry? Shall I name her Boones, her Kentons, her Estills, and her Bryants—the hardy stock upon which were grafted the more polished actions of fairer bloom, and fruit more mature? Shall I aggregate her glory, and give names to its impersonations? Shall I speak of her Breckenridges, her Nicholases, her Marshalls, and her Clays—they whose names live with Kentucky, and die when she dies—they who formed the constitution of the State, and breathed into that sacred charter the same free spirit which animated their own bosoms? What said they?—That “slavery was a blessing, the foundation of human liberty?” that it should be perpetual? No! sir, no! The law of ’33 but carries out and fulfils their just expectations and cherished hopes. The same impress of wisdom and patriotism which characterises that instrument, signed by my father (if I may be pardoned the egotism) and by your father, (Mr. Calhoun’s) marks this law. And it is with feelings of pride and increased confidence, that I and the descendants of those Breckenridges and Nicholases, and Marshalls are now standing up the most fearless defenders of this same much-abused statute. It is the cause of our fathers which I vindicate—we are degenerate sons if it fail.

The gentleman from Breckenridge would import slaves “to clear up the forests of the State—the Green river country demands the repeal.” Take one day’s ride from this capitol, and then go home and tell them that you have looked upon the most fertile and lovely land that nature boasts, and have seen it in the space of fifty years worn to the rock—tell them of the drains and clay banks and briar fields—tell them of the houses untenanted and decaying—tell them of the depopulation of the interior counties, and the ruin of our villages—tell them all this, and more—tell them that the white Kentuckian has fled before the Ethiopian—tell them that you have heard the children of the whites cry for bread, while the black were clothed and fed and laughed; and then ask them, if they will have blacks to fell their forests? Tell them that the Green River is acquiring new strength in this house, while the interior representation is fading away—tell them that Clarke has but one member here, and that Bourbon, which once voted three thousand strong, is reduced to 1,600 voters; tell them that Fayette has 10,000 slaves, as many slaves as she has horses, then ask them if they will repeal this law? Tell them this, and, my life for it, they will stand for this law for ever.

It may be asked, if the worn and waste land, seen even in the richest portions of the State, is owing to slave labour. I answer, yes. Ignorance and carelessness, which are necessarily combined in the slave, makes his the most slovenly and wasteful of all labour.

The field is ploughed—a cross furrow is run—the rain falls—the water collects in the common trench—the land is washed to the rock—the slave may be corrected—but the evil is not remedied, and the soil is lost, and the field turned waste. These things will not be seen in the free States; land which here is turned waste, or white oak, and unoccupied, are better bases than those in New England, which have been improved and have contributed to the sustenance and education of respectable families. The easy life of the slaveholder, destroys his vigilance and activity; supersedes the necessity of economy, and the habit of accumulation—let not, therefore, gentlemen be astonished that the North is radiant with railroads, whilst the South with more natural resources of wealth, follows an immeasurable distance behind. I shall not dwell upon the fact that all the educated mind is idle and unproductive, nor press the fact that idleness leads to crimes innumerable, and saps the foundations of morality, whilst it necessarily induces physical destitution. The effects of slavery upon the temper, the affections, and the moral sensibilities, are too painful to consider—I gladly pass them.

With all these facts pressing upon my every movement, I am denounced, because I will not admit slavery to be a blessing, and receive more of it; and the gentleman, undertakes to threaten me, and hold me responsible to public opinion, for every word I may utter on this floor. Sir, I strike hands with the gentleman; and when he admits that “*white labor is cheaper than slave labor*,” and that “*slave labor, drives out white labor*,” and declares, that “*white laborers are slaves*,” in the name of five hundred thousand freemen of Kentucky,* I denounce the gentleman as warring upon their dearest interests, and as pursuing a reckless policy that dries up their subsistence, and outlaw and banishes them from their native land!!! No sir, the gentleman—not I—is the defender of aristocrats. Let him tell us again, as we have been told before, that slavery stands in the way of education—let him be consistent—let him bring in a bill, as I am told he threatens to do, to abolish the common school system—let him monopolize learning as well as wealth—let the people rest in deep ignorance for ever; then they will never know their rights; and then only, may this law be repealed.

Mr. Chairman, this is not the first time that I have heard the cry of abolitionism. It has no terrors to my ear. Bowie knives and belted pistols, and the imprecations of a mad-dened mob’s vengeance, have not driven me from my country’s cause. My blood, and

* There are in round numbers 600,000 whites in Kentucky—there cannot be one slaveholder in six—about one in ten is perhaps a true estimate.

the blood of all whom I hold most dear, is ready when she calls for the sacrifice, but I shall be a tame victim neither to force nor to denunciation; and whilst abolitionism rages in the North, backed by Holland, and France and England, and, if you please, urged on by a world in arms, there is in these United States a party still more dangerous to all that makes life desirable or liberty glorious.—Never, sir, till after the ever-memorable and impotent attempt of South Carolina to dissolve this Union, did I hear or read of slavery as the only foundation of human liberty. The message of Governor McDuffie has the bad eminence of having broached and set forth this monstrous and unheard of doctrine, that filled the whole civilized world with astonishment and dismay. A distinguished gentleman from Fayette, and the honorable member from Breckenridge, are the only avowed converts to this new religion that I have ever seen. I am bound to believe that the honorable member is not initiated into the greater mysteries of this modern sect—nay, sir, I will undertake to say that he is not: but standing here in my place, with a just sense of all the weighty responsibilities which rest upon me as a man, and as the representative of a gallant State, I declare that there is a party in this country, who, disregarding all the sacred memories of the past, and the yet glorious anticipations of the future, would for ever destroy the union of these States. They are the advocates of perpetual slavery—they are “the last state” nullifiers, *southern unionists*—they are the *disunionists*. Conventions must be held, says South Carolina—conventions must be held, say some in Kentucky—conventions must be held, says the Governor of Alabama*—“the slave population must be diffused over all the slave States”—rules must be adopted for mutual safety, and permanent security of slave property. Can any man in his senses,

affect to misunderstand to what all this leads? I declare, sir, Kentucky is this day called upon to act—to take her stand now and for ever. I know not what course others may pursue, but, for my single self, I have made up my mind—“sink or swim, live or perish, I stand by the” Union.

Shall we rest in fatal security till this law is repealed—the slave population diffused—conventions held—till we are shorn of our strength by calumny, and bound hand and foot, and given over by our leaders to this Southern Union? No. I lift up my voice now—here, in the face of all Kentucky, I do most solemnly *protest against these treasonable schemes*. The broad banner of the United States’ constitution is my shield and only safety—tear not my State—let not, I implore you, old Kentucky pass from under its hallowed panoply. Let it not be in vain that Adams, and Franklin, and Henry, and Jefferson, and Madison, and Hamilton, have lived; not in vain that Washington, and Greene, and Lincoln, and Fayette, and heroes innumerable, hoped, and bled, and died—not in vain that liberty has been proclaimed throughout the world, and the sunken spirits of millions elevated by the cry of freedom! Let not the treasure and blood which in the last war—the second revolution—added fresh laurels to a “nation of brothers,” have been spent in vain! Let not Thames, and Erie, and Champlain, and New Orleans, rest in vain in the memories of men. By all the deep and inextinguishable yearnings of the immortal spirit for all that is good and glorious, let not our hopes perish! let not the Union be dissolved! In the day of trial, there shall be one Kentuckian shrouded under the stars and stripes—one heart undecorated with the faith that slavery is the foundation of civil liberty—one being who could not live in a government denying the right of petition, abolishing the liberty of the press, and the liberty of speech—one man who would not be the outlaw of nations—the slave of a slave!

*Late message of the Governor of Alabama, and R. Wickliffe’s speech.

SPEECH OF MR. GIDDINGS,

OF OHIO,

Upon the proposition of Mr. Thompson, of South Carolina, to appropriate one hundred thousand dollars for the removal, subsistence, and benefit of such of the Seminole chiefs and warriors as may surrender for emigration. Delivered in the U. States House of Representatives, Feb. 9, 1841.

Mr. Giddings said he rose to congratulate the country upon the prospect of bringing this unhappy war to a close. I am, (said he,) however, in some degree incredulous as to its speedy termination by the means proposed by the gentleman from South Carolina, (Mr. Thompson.)

While I would go as far as any member to bring this war to an immediate close, I think it important that we should carefully examine the causes that brought it on; the reasons of its repeated renewal and continuation, in order that we may be able to adopt such measures as will ensure peace at the earliest possible moment. I think the plan proposed is defective in one particular; and before I take my seat I intend to offer an amendment, which, in my opinion, will correct the omission.

This war has become a subject of deep interest to the people of the nation. It has continued to occupy the attention of the government and the efforts of the army for more than five years. Our officers and soldiers have fallen victims to the climate, and to the hostile tribe with whom we have been contending. Near forty millions of the national treasure have been swallowed up in this most unfortunate contest. The attention of our people has often been called to these facts; while few, very few of them have been fully informed as to the original exciting cause of this war, or the manner in which it has been renewed and conducted. Our army has been defeated, and I fear that our national honor has not remained altogether untarnished.—“Rumor, with her thousand tongues,” has whispered of transactions which, if real, ought to be known; if not, these rumors should be for ever silenced. The able speech of the gentleman from Vermont, over the way, (Mr. Everett,) in 1836, gave us some ideas of the manner in which the Indians with whom we are now contending were treated. Our own violations of the treaty with them, while we required a rigid observance on their part of all its terms, were clearly and ably expressed by him. It is not my intention to review our treaties with those Indians, or to speak of the

manner in which those treaties were effected, or of the great injustice done to the Indians, except where these subjects have manifestly conduced to the disastrous war now under discussion. It is, however, my purpose to call the attention of the committee to the causes which led to these hostilities; to that policy which has involved us in the vast sacrifice of life and treasure expended in Florida during the last five years; and to the effect which that policy has had upon the rights and the interests of the free States. I also propose to examine, for a few minutes, the manner in which this war has been conducted, as well as the effect which the conduct of our high officers of government must have upon the feelings of the people of the free states, and upon the honor of our nation. In doing this, I intend to test the constitutionality of that policy, by those plain and fundamental principles of our government to which I think we must all yield assent. In claiming for my constituents and the state which I in part have the honor to represent, as well as for the free states generally, the rights and privileges which I think belong to them, and which I think should be held sacred by every officer of government, I shall rely upon no principle that has not been frequently asserted by the slave states, and by both of the great political parties. Indeed, I intend to assert no principle but such as will command the assent of every member on this floor.

I have made these preliminary remarks in order that the committee may the better understand what I intend to say hereafter; and having stated my premises, I will enter upon an investigation of the causes which led to the Florida war. Before I do this, however, I will take occasion to say that the lands occupied by these Indians formed no inducement for us to enter upon this war. General Jessup says, “those lands would not pay for the medicines used by our troops while employed against the Indians.” The Seminole Indians, by the treaty entered into at Payne’s Landing, on the 9th May, A. D. 1832, agreed, to emigrate west of the Mississippi upon certain conditions. I shall not inquire whe-

ther those conditions were performed on our part, or whether the Indians were or were not morally bound to the observance of this stipulation. It is well known that they refused to emigrate, and that such refusal induced General Jackson to order the military force of the United States to Florida to compel them to emigrate. This attempted compulsion brought on the hostilities, which still continue. The important question now proposed, and which I intend to answer, is, why did they refuse to emigrate? The answer, however, may be found in executive documents of the 24th Congress, at its first session, (House doc. No. 271, p. 8.) in an official letter of Wiley Thompson, Indian agent, to William P. Duval, Governor of Florida, dated January 1, 1834, nearly a year previous to the commencement of hostilities. Speaking of the unwillingness of the Indians to emigrate, Gen. Thompson says: "The *principal* causes which operate to cherish this feeling hostile to emigration are, first, the fear that their re-union with the Creeks, which will subject them to the government and control of the Creek national council will be a surrender of a large negro property, now held by those people, to the Creeks, as an antagonist claimant."

Thus, sir, we have official intelligence that the *principal* cause of the war, was the fear of losing this "negro property." And we are led to inquire into the history of these conflicting claims to the "negro property" between the Creeks and Seminoles.

In the letter above quoted, Gen Thompson, speaking further on the subject, says: "The Creek claim to negroes now in the possession of the Seminole Indians, which is supposed to be the first cause of hostility to the emigration of the latter tribe, grows out of the treaty of 1821 between the United States and the former." We have now traced the original and principal cause of this war, as given by the Indian agent, to the treaty of Indian Spring, made on the 8th January, 1821. This is the official report of an accredited officer of Government, who had long mingled in the councils of the Indians, and who was most familiar with their views, and whose word, I presume was never doubted. I will now ask the attention of the committee for a moment, while I relate some of the historical facts that brought about this treaty of 1821.

We are all aware that Indians frequently commit trespasses upon the property of their white neighbors. In 1802, Congress passed a law by which the people of Georgia received pay for all such trespasses committed subsequently by the Creek Indians, from the public treasure, and the amount thus paid was retained from the annuities or other moneys due the Indians. By the treaty of 1821, an attempt was made to obtain for the people of

Georgia, pay for slaves who had left their masters and taken up their residence with the Indians, *prior* to 1802; and an agreement was obtained from them, consenting that the United States should pay to the people of Georgia the amount found due them for such losses prior to 1802, and retain the amount thus paid out of the money due the Indians for the lands sold to the U. States; provided the sum thus found due should not exceed \$250,000. The indemnity sought for the slaveholders of Georgia by this treaty, was for losses sustained twenty years prior to the treaty, and extending back an indefinite period.

Under this treaty the Creek Indians were compelled to pay for slaves that had left their masters forty or fifty years prior to the date of the treaty. Nor were they compelled merely to pay for slaves that lived or had taken up their residence with the Indians; but they were charged for the value of the slave when shown to have left his master, without proof that he was with the Indians, or had any existence in their country. I speak upon the authority of Mr. Wirt, late Attorney General, as expressed in Executive Doc. No. 128, 1st session, 20th Congress. Nor were these abuses unaccompanied with others of equally flagrant character. Mr. Wirt, in the same communication, assures the President that the price allowed for a slave was *two or three times his real value*. Yet, after paying for all the slaves that could be shown to have left their masters, at *two or three times their real value*, together with other property taken or destroyed by the Seminoles prior to 1805, it was found that the whole amounted to but \$101,000, leaving in the hands of Government \$149,000 belonging to the Indians. This money, however, was not returned to the Indians, but was retained by Government until 1834, when the owners of fugitive slaves petitioned Congress that it might be divided among them. This petition was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs, and the chairman, an honorable member from Georgia, (Mr. Gilmer,) reported in favor of dividing the money among the owners of fugitive slaves, as a compensation for the *offspring which the slaves would have borne had they remained in bondage*. This plan, which I think sets at perfect defiance all Yankee calculations, was rejected by Congress. But a bill was subsequently introduced, providing for a division of this money among the owners of those slaves by way of *interest*, in direct violation of the treaty, and notwithstanding they had previously received two or three times the real value of their slaves; and this bill soon passed into a law. This was done in 1834. These slaves had most of them united with the Seminoles or *runaways* in the peninsula of Florida, and the Creeks, (from whom the Seminoles had formerly separated) having paid to the people of Georgia two or

three times the value of those slaves, now claimed them as their property. The Creeks had mostly gone west of the Mississippi, and their agents were in Florida demanding these negroes of the Seminoles. The Seminoles, in the mean time, it is said, had intermarried with the negroes, and stood connected with them in all the relations of domestic life. If they emigrated west, their wives and children would be taken from them by the Creeks as slaves; if they remained in Florida, they must defend themselves against the army of the United States. With them, sir, it was *war* on one side, and *slavery* on the other.— This state of things was entirely brought about by the efforts of our Government to obtain pay for the fugitive slaves of Georgia.

This interference of the Federal Government in behalf of slavery in Georgia, appears to have been the origin of all our Florida difficulties.

[Mr. Warren, of Georgia, called Mr. Giddings to order on the ground of irrelevancy.

The Chairman, Mr. Clifford, of Maine, decided that the remarks of Mr. Giddings respecting the origin of the Florida war were in order; and Mr. G. proceeded.]

I think this interposition of our Federal Government unconstitutional and improper, and will assign the reasons of that opinion.

[Mr. Habersham, of Georgia, called Mr. Giddings to order, and stated that the gentleman from Ohio had intimated his intention to offer an amendment to the proposition before the House, and was proceeding to make a speech pretty freely interlarded with abolition while the committee were yet uninformed as to the terms of the amendment he intended to offer.

Mr. Habersham desired to hear the amendment.]

Mr. Giddings resumed. I arose, Mr. Chairman, to discuss the Florida war, and I intend doing so, and cannot be drawn off upon any collateral points, nor frightened from it by the cry of *abolition*.

I will, however, say to the gentleman from Georgia that I have not said, nor do I intend saying, one word upon the subject of *abolition*, although I may perhaps touch upon the doctrine of *State rights and strict construction*.

I hold that if the slaves of Georgia or any other State leave their masters, the Federal Government has no constitutional authority to employ our army or navy for their recapture, or to apply the national treasure to repurchase them. We possess no constitutional power to do either. If, however, gentlemen of the South, who hold to a strict and rigid construction of that instrument, will point me to the clause of our constitution containing such authority, I will confess my obligations to them. Such power would necessarily include the power to tax the free States to an indefinite extent for the support

of slavery, and for arresting every fugitive slave who has fled from his master, within the several States of this Union. Such power I deny most distinctly and emphatically. But, sir, we have as much right to do this *directly* as we have to do it *indirectly*. We have as much power to employ our army and navy in recapturing fugitive slaves as we have to make a treaty with the Indians to retake such fugitives, and then employ our army and navy to compel the Indians to do it. We have as much power to tax the free States, and apply the money *directly* for the purchase of fugitive slaves, as we have to tax them to carry on a war for the purpose of compelling the surrender of such slaves; or even to apply the national treasure to the holding of such treaties. In truth, sir, we have no power *whatever* over the subject or institution of slavery *within* the several States of this Union. We have neither the power to *sustain* nor *abolish* it, to *create* or *destroy* it. I mean sir, that we have no such powers delegated to us for *any purpose whatever*. We have not the power to sustain it in the South or establish it in the North. I know it is said, and repeated, and asserted, that a portion of the people of the States hold that we have power to *abolish slavery in the States*. I can only say that I have never met with any intelligent man who has advanced such doctrine in my hearing. For my own part, I believe we have as much power to *establish slavery in the free States* as we have to *abolish it in the slave States*. I say nothing of the constitutional power of Congress over the *slave trade between the States*. But, Mr. Chairman, I am not willing to believe that any gentleman on this floor will urge the right of taxing the freemen of the North for the holding in slavery the colored men at the South.

I would not use those distinctions of *North* and *South*, could I avoid them. Yet I think no apology is due from me on this point, as I have constantly heard them used, and repeated, and reiterated by gentlemen from a certain portion of the Union, during the three years I have had a seat in this hall.

But, sir, I wish further to look into this power, or rather the want of power, in Congress over slavery within the States of this Union. In December, A. D. 1838, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. Atherton) introduced to this House, a resolution expressing the sense of the House in regard to this power.

[The Chairman informed Mr. Giddings that the discussion of those resolutions would not be in order.]

I had, Mr. Chairman, no idea of discussing those resolutions. I merely refer to one of them as expressing the views of the North and of the South on this subject. It speaks the voice of all the hundred and ninety-eight

members who voted for it. It reads as follows: "Resolved, That this Government is a Government of limited powers: that by the constitution of the United States, it has no power whatever over the institution of slavery in the several states of this Union." This resolution received the almost unanimous support of this House. There was one hundred and ninety-eight votes in favor of it, and but six against it. I voted for it myself, because I deemed it correct. Every member from the slave states voted for it. I shall be slow to suspect that any of those gentlemen will now change their position, and say that we have power to sustain slavery; and that in voting for the resolution, they only intended to say that we have no power whatever over the subject to abolish it. I am aware Mr. Chairman, that the Federal Government has at times interposed its influence to obtain for the citizens of slave states, compensation for slaves taken by Indian tribes and Great Britain. But this fact furnishes no argument against the position I have assumed. The cases alluded to were merely the act of the Executive, interposed by common consent, without discussion or objection, for the purpose of obtaining from such tribe or government a compensation which we have uniformly refused when demanded of ourselves; for I believe it to be well understood, that we have never, in any instance, paid the owner for the loss of a slave, even when such slave was pressed into the public service, and killed while thus in the employ of the government. The Florida war having its origin in attempts on the part of the Federal government to sustain slavery in one of the States of this Union, is so far unconstitutional, and is directly opposed to the doctrine contained in the resolution above quoted, which received the unanimous support of the slave states.

And now, having called the attention of the committee to the remote and principal cause of this war, I will ask their attention to some of the more proximate and immediate causes. On the 21st of May, 1836, this house adopted a resolution calling upon the then President, for "information respecting the cause of the Florida war." On the 3d of June, the President transmitted to the house sundry papers relating to that subject; among which may be found an address or petition of nearly one hundred gentlemen, said to be among the principal inhabitants of Florida, calling on the President to interpose the power of the General Government for the purpose of securing them in the possession of their slaves. These gentlemen, speaking of the Seminole Indians, say: "While this indomitable people continue where they now are, the owners of slaves in our Territory, and even in the states contiguous, cannot for a moment, in any thing like security, enjoy this kind of property."

This was a plain, direct, and palpable request for the President to interpose the strong arm of the nation in behalf of slavery. Nor did the President remain deaf to such request; but he immediately endorsed an order on the back of the petition, directing the Secretary at War to make inquiry, and if the charges were found true, "to direct the Indians to prepare forthwith to remove west of the Mississippi." Soon after this, the treaty of Payne's Landing, having remained nearly two years unnoticed by the President, was sent to the Senate for their sanction; and every preparation was made to compel the Indians, by physical force, to remove west of the Mississippi. A correspondence was carried on with the officers of our army; and all the military force that could be brought to Florida was concentrated there, for the purpose of compelling the Indians at the point of the bayonet, to emigrate. This was done without even laying the subject before Congress, or asking for any legislative sanction.

It is not my intention to enlarge on this point, or to comment upon this very extraordinary interposition of executive influence in favor of slavery, without constitutional or legitimate sanction. Neither have I time to comment upon the manner in which the treaty of Payne's Landing was obtained from the Indians; nor upon the terms of that extraordinary treaty; nor upon the still more extraordinary method of enforcing the Indians to an observance of the compact, by the use of the bayonet, without consulting the legislative authority, in defiance of justice and without precedent. But I desire to examine into the causes of this war, and discover how far it has had its origin in attempts by the Executive to support and maintain slavery at the national expense, and in violation of the rights of the free states. In doing this, I shall speak from no vague conjecture, or uncertain suspicion; but what I say shall be "from the book;" from documentary evidence and official reports.

The address to which I have called the attention of the committee, estimates the number of negroes among the Seminole Indians at that time, at more than five hundred; and they declare it as their belief that four-fifths of them are fugitive slaves. On the 20th of January, 1834, Governor Duval, in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, says: "The slaves belonging to the Indians, have a controlling influence over the minds of their masters, and are entirely opposed to any change of residence. It will be best at once to adopt firm and decided measures; such as will demonstrate to the Indians the determination of Government to see the treaty justly and fairly executed. *This cannot be done until the bands of outlaws (fugitive slaves,) mentioned in the agent's report, are arrested and broken up; for so long as they are permit-*

ted to remain, every Indian that is unwilling to emigrate will seek their protection." No man, perhaps, possessed better knowledge of these facts than Governor Duval, who assures us that the negroes controlled the Indians, and that the Indians sought the protection and support of the fugitive slaves. He further assures us that nothing could be done while those fugitive slaves were permitted to remain in Florida. If gentlemen will bear this advice in mind, they will better understand the policy that subsequently guided our army against the Indians.

In a letter dated January 26, 1834, Governor Duval says: "*The slaves belonging to the Indians must be made to fear for themselves before they will cease to influence the minds of their masters.*" "*You may be assured (says he) that the first step towards the emigration of these Indians must be the breaking up of the runaway slaves and Indians.*" Thus we are informed that the war must be first waged against the *fugitive slaves*. Perhaps I ought to explain that slavery among the Indians is very different from what it is among the whites. It is comparative independence. Hence the slaves of the Indians have a perfect horror of slavery among the white people. Of course the fugitive slaves and the Indian slaves become intimate friends, and act in concert for the liberty of all.

[E. Campbell, of South Carolina, called Mr. Giddings to order, and stated that the member from Ohio was evidently assailing indirectly an institution which, by the rules of the House was not liable to be assailed.]

The Chairman said that the gentleman from Ohio had expressed his intention to discuss the *Florida war*, and he had understood the remarks as having reference to that subject. The chair could not attribute a different motive from that expressed by a gentleman himself. I am (said he) therefore constrained to say the gentleman from Ohio is in order.]

Mr. Giddings resumed. I was not aware Mr. Chairman, that our rules protected from discussion any institution whatever. I will, however, assure the gentleman from South Carolina that I shall only allude to the subject of slavery so far as it stands connected with the Florida war.—That so far as it has been the means of drawing forty millions of dollars from the public Treasury, and most of it from the free States, I intended to assail it, and no further. Governor Duval says, "these slaves must first be made to fear for themselves." The war was first to be waged against *slaves*, for the reason that they influenced the minds of their masters in favor of *liberty*. In other words, the war must be directed against the right of a slave to express his mind to his Indian master on the subject of *human rights*. Sir, these slaves were made to fear for themselves in pursuance of

these intimations of Governor Duval, as I will now endeavor to show this committee. On the 28th October, 1834, General Thompson, in a letter addressed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs says: "There are many very likely negroes in this nation, (Seminole.) Some of the whites in the adjacent settlements manifest a restless desire to obtain them, and I have no doubt that Indian raised negroes are now in possession of the whites."

Thus, sir, it seems that kidnapping was not unknown in that country. This same General Thompson, the accredited officer of this Government, on the 9th January, 1835, advises Government, that an expedition should be set on foot for the double purpose of driving the Indians within the boundary and to capture negroes, many of who it is believed are runaway slaves." And, sir, our army was put in motion to capture negroes and slaves as we shall find in the sequel. But I wish to call the attention of the committee for a few moments to the manner in which these slaves in the words of Governor Duval, were "made to fear for themselves." On the 28th July, 1835, John Walker, one of the Appalachicola chiefs belonging to the Seminole band, wrote to General Thompson, Indian agent as follows: "I am (says he) induced to write you in consequence of the depredations making, and attempted to be made, upon my property, by a company of negro stealers, some of whom are from Columbus, Georgia, and have connected themselves with Brown and Douglass. I should like your advice how I am to act. I dislike to make any trouble or to have any difficult with any of the white people. But if they trespass upon my premises and my rights, I must defend myself in the best way I can. If they do make this attempt, and I have no doubt they will, they must bear the consequences. But is there no civil law to protect me? Are the free negroes and the negroes belonging in this town to be stolen away publicly, and, in the face of all law and justice, carried off and sold to fill the pockets of those worse THAN LAND PIRATES. Douglass and his company hired a man who has two large TRAINED DOGS for the purpose, to come down and take Billey. He is from Mobile, and follows for a livelihood catching runaway negroes."

This, sir, is the language of a savage, addressed to his civilized neighbors. He called in vain for protection. A few days after the date of this letter, he was robbed of all his negroes: so says the report of the United States attorney, addressed to the Secretary of War, and dated April 21, 1836. But of the number of freemen kidnapped at the same time, we are not informed. At all events, "the slaves were made to fear for themselves," as Governor Duval advised. Can we wonder that those Indians were driven to acts of desperation?

Here, sir, is the first mention I have met of the use of "bloodhounds" in the Florida war. They were used by "negro stealers," for the purpose of catching the colored people of Florida, and our officers have copied the example. But I intend giving further examples of the use of bloodhounds before I close. I have, however, no time for comment. My object is to place facts before the people of this nation, and let every man make his own comments, and draw his own conclusions. I will give one more example of the mode of "teaching slaves to fear for themselves." E-con-chattimico was also an Indian chief of the Seminole band, living upon the Appalachicola river, and was perhaps one who signed the treaty at Camp Moultrie in 1833, by which we solemnly pledged the faith of this nation to protect the Indians in the enjoyment of their lives and property. This chief is said to have owned twenty slaves, valued at \$15,000. These negro stealers were seen hovering around his plantation, and their object could not be misunderstood. By the advice of the sub-agent, he armed himself and people for the purpose of defending themselves. When the negro stealers learned that E-con-chattimico's people had armed themselves in defence of their liberty, (for they considered Indian slavery liberty, compared with white slavery,) they raised a report that the Indians had armed themselves for the purpose of uniting with the hostile Seminoles, and murdering the white people. On learning this, E-con-chattimico at once delivered up his arms to the white people, and threw himself upon their protection. Disarmed and unable to defend his people, they were immediately kidnapped, taken off and sold into interminable bondage. E-con-chattimico now calls on us to pay him for the loss he has sustained in the violation of our treaty, in which we solemnly covenanted to protect him and his property. Robbed, abused, insulted, and deceived, he emigrated to the West, and now looks to us for a redress of the wrongs he has sustained. I give the substance of his statement, as related by him in his petition, and communicated by General Thompson, Governor Duval, and the District Attorney of East Florida, and sworn to by several witnesses.

But, sir, this transaction, and others equally abusive, were soon known throughout Florida. The Indians and negroes were thus admonished of the necessity of uniting their efforts and energies in defence of their liberty and lives. Governor Duval, speaking of this transaction, in a letter to the Secretary of War, dated the 23d of May, says, "it was an outrage well calculated to rouse the Indians to hostility." These are the acts that have led us on, step by step, until we have found ourselves in the midst of a most disastrous war.

The men who committed these robberies, and kidnapped these negroes, were well known, for the acts were committed in open day; their names and places of residence are distinctly mentioned: but I have yet to learn that any one of them has been punished in any manner for this warfare against the liberty of the blacks and the rights of the Indians. Indeed it seems to have been an object with some of the officers employed in Florida, to induce Government itself to enter into the business of capturing and selling slaves. J. W. Harris, disbursing agent of Government, in a letter to the Commissioner General of Subsistence, dated December 30, 1836, says: "I would respectfully suggest that you recommend to the honourable Secretary of War that the annuity due to the hostile Indians be retained to defray the expenses of this war; and that the slaves who shall be captured, whom I believe to have been generally active instigators to our present troubles, be sold at public sale, and the proceeds appropriated to the same object." This is the first official proposition that has come to my knowledge, for the Government to enter into competition with the "negro stealers," by capturing and selling slaves. At the time this suggestion was made, we were engaged in open war with these people, who had sought liberty in the wilds of Florida. If they were captured, they would be prisoners of war; and for us to sell them as slaves, would be as much a violation of our national honor, as it would have been for them to have sold, as slaves, such of our people as they were able to capture.

I may perhaps be permitted to remark, that among the people of the free States nothing is regarded with so much disgust and abhorrence as the buying and selling of men, women, and children, and that this feeling is common among all classes and all political parties.

Mr. Chairman, I have called the attention of the committee to what is officially announced as the first and principal cause of this war, and also to some of the proximate and immediate causes. I think no man can doubt that it originated in the attempts of the Executive to support slavery by the influence and efforts of our National Government, in violation, as I think, of the constitution and of the rights of the Free States. I propose to investigate the subject a little further, and to examine into the cause that led to its renewal and continuance.

On the 6th day of March, 1837, General Jessup entered into a conventional arrangement with the Seminole Indians, by which it was agreed that hostilities should immediately cease; that the Indians should emigrate west of the Mississippi; and that they should be secure in their lives and property—and "that negroes their bona fide property,"

should accompany them. By the terms of this compact, no negroes were included except those who were called the "bona fide property" of the Indians, although Governor Duval, General Jessup, and the Indian agent all unite in saying that the Indians were controlled by the blacks. These blacks comprised both fugitive slaves and free people of color, who were connected with the Indians by marriage and consanguinity. The attempts to separate them appear to me to have been hopeless.

The Indian who had married a fugitive, and reared a family of children, would not, in my opinion, quietly fold his arms and view his offspring and their mother marched off into interminable slavery, while himself should go west. Nor do I believe that will ever be done. They are all the enemies of our country, fighting in arms against us. They have already cost us much treasure and the blood of many freemen. If they surrender, they surrender themselves prisoners of war. I would send them all west together. No person can doubt our perfect right to do so; and I think justice to the nation and to the Indians requires it—and my amendment will be to that effect. General Jessup's attempt to separate them failed, and I believe all further attempts of that kind will fail.

This compact between General Jessup and the Indians bears date on the 6th March. On the 18th of the same month, a solemn remonstrance against this arrangement was signed by a number of gentlemen of high standing in Florida, and transmitted to the Secretary of War.—These gentlemen totally objected to any pacification that did not provide for the re-capture of their fugitive slaves. They objected to the Indians going west until they should take and return to their owners the slaves who had escaped from their masters in Florida. The remonstrance may be found at 55th page of executive document of the House of Representatives, No. 225, of the 3d session of the 25th Congress. It is an interesting paper but of too great length for me to read at this time. It shows, in a most palpable light, the views entertained by those gentlemen in regard to the cause and object of this war. Whatever others may have thought upon that subject, it is clear that they supposed the war to have been commenced and carried on for the purpose of aiding them in holding their slaves—and they declare it incompatible with the honor and dignity of the nation to permit the Indians to emigrate until they shall bring the slaves back to their owners. I have no doubt they felt that they were correct in their views—nor do I believe they entertained a doubt of the justice and propriety of taxing the free States to any extent in support of slavery.—There was, however, a cessation of hostilities, notwithstanding these remonstrances.

The Indians ceased for a time to plunder the defenceless families of Florida, to burn their cabins, and murder the defenceless women and children—but, sir, the fugitive slaves remained yet hidden in the swamps and everglades of that untraversed country. Peace on such terms appears to have been unacceptable to the people of Florida. I will not speak the conclusions of my own mind, however, on this subject, but will give you the words of a high officer of government, who was on the spot, and who spoke from positive knowledge. I refer to General Jessup, who, in a letter dated 29th March, 1837, and directed to Colonel John Warren, speaking of the anxiety of the Indians to maintain the peace agreed upon says: "There is no disposition on the part of the great body of the Indians to renew hostilities; and they will, I am sure, faithfully fulfil their engagements, if the inhabitants be prudent. But any attempt to seize their negroes or other property would be followed by an immediate resort to arms."

Thus we have the authority of General Jessup for saying that the Indians were anxious to maintain peace. That he was at the same time apprehensive that the people would attempt to seize the Indian negroes, I know not. He certainly exhibited fears on the subject. For, on the 5th April, being seven days subsequent to this letter to Colonel Warren, we find that he issued a general order in the following words: "The Commanding General has reason to believe that the interference of unprincipled white men with the negro property of the Seminole Indians, if not immediately checked, will prevent their emigration, and lead to a renewal of hostilities."

The order goes on to prohibit any person not connected with the public service from entering upon the territory assigned to the Indians. In this order we have official intelligence that the whites did in fact interfere with the Indian slaves, or, in other words, they began to rob the Indians of their slaves almost as soon as the hostilities ceased. * As to the outrages committed upon the free blacks during the suspension of hostilities we have no information in this order, and are left to infer the course pursued towards them from the evidence I have previously given. If these people were sufficiently rapacious to rob the Indians of their negroes under such circumstances, it is easy to form an opinion as to the safety of the free colored people found with the Indians. How many of them, if any, were made slaves, we know not. On the 18th April, twelve days after the date of his letters to Colonel Warren, General Jessup wrote to Governor Call, saying: "If the citizens of the Territory be prudent, the war may be considered at an end. But any attempt to interfere with the

Indian negroes would cause an immediate resort to hostilities. The negroes control their masters, and they have heard of the act of your legislative council. Thirty or more of the Indian negro men were at and near my camp on the Withlacoochie late in March. But the arrival of two or three citizens of Florida, said to be in search of negroes, caused them to disperse at once, and I doubt whether they will come in again. At all events, the emigration will be delayed a month, I apprehend, in consequence of the alarm of these negroes."

The embarrassment into which General Jessup was thrown is quite apparent, notwithstanding his order of the 5th April. The people were anxious to hunt for slaves. The negroes, it would seem, were under constant apprehension, and fled when a slave catcher came into their vicinity. Whether the Indian negroes had cause for that fear, we are unable to judge, except from the document before us. Between the Indians and our army, it appears there was no difficulty whatever. But the difficulty appears to have been between the Indians and negroes on one side, and those who sought to rob the Indians and enslave the blacks on the other. It is also quite evident that some of the people of Florida were restless under the order of the 5th of April, prohibiting them from entering the Indian country. When intelligence respecting that order reached St. Augustine, it seems a public meeting was called and a committee appointed to procure its repeal, in order that the white people might enter the Indian country for the *purpose of seizing slaves*.

This committee, said to be composed of men of high standing, addressed a long letter to Gen. Jessup, in which they say, speaking of the people of Florida; "While they believe that the accomplishment of a certain pacification must, as it ought, be an object of primary importance in these negotiations, they persuade themselves that the preservation of the negro property belonging to the inhabitants of this desolated country, must be seen by him to be an object of scarcely less moment." It is a most undeniable fact, borne out by every part of these official documents, that the people of Florida supposed that the great object of the war was to aid the slaveholders in capturing and recovering their slaves. This same protest goes on to recount facts in regard to their slaves having run away, and finding a place of refuge in the Indian country, and the concluding of an armistice by General Jessup, without getting their slaves back, and then the signers add: "Against such a course, a course so destructive of their rights and interests, the citizens of St. Augustine, and others, in public meeting assembled for themselves and on behalf of the inhabitants of East Florida generally,

do most solemnly protest." This, sir, is the solemn protest of the citizens of Florida against any cessation of hostilities upon other terms than that of *getting back their slaves*, or rather of permitting them to enter the Indian country to obtain their slaves. The horror with which the negroes, both Indian slaves and free blacks, regarded those who came within their territory for the purpose of catching slaves is shown by the letter of General Jessup, just quoted, in which he states that thirty Indian negroes, in and about his camp, at once runaway when they heard that two men were in quest of slaves.

With these people, the great, important, and absorbing subject appears to have been slaves, not peace. Indeed, we have their solemn protest against extinguishing the flames of war, or stopping the torrent of blood which had so long flowed, until they should have their slaves secured to them.—They were unwilling that the treasure of the nation should cease to be poured out until they should have their fellow men brought back to bondage.

But, sir, I should fatigue the committee too much were I to refer to a tenth part of the documentary evidence which I have before me on this subject, or to that part which goes to prove the attempts of our government officers to get back the slaves who had escaped from their masters; or the manner in which that object entered into the plans of the War Department. Nor have I time to give any considerable portion of the evidence showing how, this object of capturing slaves and supporting slavery entered into the designs, and was carried out in the movements of the army. The time which may reasonably be claimed by me will only permit me to glance at the subject, and to lay before this committee and the people of this nation a small portion of the facts which I wish I were able to present to them. It will be sufficient in this place to remark, that immediately after these protestations against peace—these official communications showing that the Indians had no desire to renew the war, and that the only danger to be apprehended was the unlawful interference by the people of Florida with the Indian negroes, the flames of war were again lighted up; our troops were again put in motion; the treasury of our nation was again placed under contribution; and the blood of defenceless women and helpless children again flowed, in order, as it appears, that slaveholders might recover their slaves. I speak, sir, from *official documentary evidence*. These facts and those which I intend to refer to are on record in the archives of our nation, and will descend in all coming time to give character to this unholy war.

It would appear, from the perusal of the documents before me, that General Jessup was unable to fulfil his covenant with the Indians, to protect them, and the negroes connected with them; but on this point we have no direct evidence. Certain it is, that he was unable to bring the negroes to terms of submission. I use the term negroes,

because he says, officially, that "the negroes controlled the Indians." Being unable to subdue the enemy, his troops falling a prey to the unhealthy climate in which he was situated, the citizens being murdered, their habitations burned, and his army discouraged, he issued the order No. 160, to which I will now call the attention of the committee. That part to which I particularly refer is in the following words: "All Indian property captured from this date will belong to the corps or detachment taking it." The sense in which the term property was used in this order is fully explained in a letter of General Jessup to Colonel Warren, dated a few days subsequent, in which, speaking of the Seminoles, he says:—"Their negroes, cattle, and horses, will belong to the corps by which they are captured." This order bears date the 3d of August, 1837, and may be found at page 4 of the documents communicated to this House by the Secretary of War on the 27th day of February, 1839. I think that history will record this as the first general order issued by the commander of an American army in which the catching of slaves is held out as an incentive to military duty. I mention this fact, and bring it to the consideration of the committee with feelings of deep mortification. As an American, I feel humbled at this act, which cannot be viewed by the civilized world as otherwise than dishonorable to our arms and nation. That this officer, entrusted with the command of our army and the honor of our flag, should appeal to the cupidity, the desire of plunder, and the worst of human passions, in order to stimulate his men to effort, is I think, to be regretted by men of all parties, in all sections of our country. Our national flag, which floated in proud triumph at Saratoga, which was enveloped in a blaze of glory at Monmouth and Yorktown, seems to have been prostituted in Florida to the base purpose of leading on an organized company of "negro catchers." Sir, no longer is "our country" the battle cry of our army in their advance to victory: but "slaves" has become the watchword to inspire them to effort.—No longer does the war-worn veteran, amid the battle's rage, think of his country's glory, and nerve his arm in behalf of freedom; but with eagle eyes he watches the wavering ranks of the enemy, and as the smoke rises from the battlefield, he plunges amid their fleeting cohorts to seize upon the sable foe that he may make him his future slave.

But I intend to pursue this subject further. I shall now show that this Government—this nation, composed of twenty-six States, some holding slaves, and some denying the right of man to hold his fellow man in slavery—has been made to *deal in slaves*; to become the owner of slaves; that this administration, now just going out of power, has dealt in "human flesh;" that the funds of government, drawn from the pockets of free laborers, have been paid for the capture of fugitive slaves, and for the purchase of slaves captured from the Seminole Indians. And for that purpose I refer to order No. 175, dated at Tampa Bay, September 5, 1837. It reads as follows:

"1. The Seminole negroes captured by the army

will be taken on account of the Government, and held subject to the order of the Secretary of War.

"2. The sum of eight thousand dollars will be paid to the Creek chiefs and warriors, by whom they were captured, or who were present at the capture, in full for their claim to them.

"3. To induce the Creek Indians to take alive and not destroy the negroes of citizens who had been captured by the Seminoles, a reward was promised them for all they should secure. They captured and secured thirty-five, who have been returned to their owners. The owners have paid nothing, but the promise to the Indians must be fulfilled. The sum of twenty dollars will be allowed to them for each from the public funds.

"4. Lieutenant Searle is charged with the execution of this order."

This order, taking the negroes "on account of Government," bears date on the 6th Sept. From that time they were to be "held subject to the order of the Secretary of War." On the 7th October this order of General Jessup was approved by the honorable Secretary of War, as may be seen by reference to page 43 of the document just quoted. Thus, sir, we have official documentary evidence that the people of this nation, in their national capacity, became the "purchasers of human beings." The money of our people, of freemen of this nation, was paid for the purchase of slaves.

This fund, most of it collected in the free States, and coming from the earnings of *free whites*, was appropriated for the purchase of Indian slaves; and of those who had sought freedom amid the swamps and everglades of Florida, while our most vital interests at the North are abandoned, and even the implements necessary to carry on our harbor improvements have been sold, and the money thus obtained placed in the common fund, and, perhaps, paid for the purchase of these slaves at the South. I hear it said, in an undertone near me, that the purchase of these fugitive slaves was justifiable and correct. I may differ with the gentleman as to the justice or honor of that proceeding; but I cannot enter into that subject at this time. I would merely say, if the slaveholders wish to have their slaves repurchased, I desire them to furnish the funds, Mr. Chairman, and not thrust their hands into the pockets of our constituents and mine to obtain the money to pay them.

(Mr. Black, of Georgia, desired to be informed whether the member from Ohio alluded to the citizens of Georgia?)

Mr. Giddings resumed. I deny the right of the members to interrupt me for the purpose of inquiring whether I alluded to *them*, or to their constituents. If the garment does not fit them, why do they attempt to force it on? I alluded to the fact, that money is, and has been collected in the free States, and used to buy up the fugitive slaves of the South, while our most important interests at the North are abandoned.

I see gentlemen here who are tremulously sensitive if the word *tariff*, or *harbor*, or *manufacture*, is but *mentioned*; and I should like to compare

the benefits to the nation, arising from the forty millions expended in the Florida war, with the benefits of the thirteen millions expended throughout the United States for harbor purposes; but I have not time to do it now.

I was speaking upon the subject of retaking fugitive slaves, and I think it due to the people of the nation that they should be informed of the assiduous manner in which our troops pursued the business of catching slaves.

In a letter, dated at Tampa Bay, 25th May, 1837, directed to Lieut. Col. Harney, General Jessup says: "If you see Powell (Oceola) tell him I shall send out and take all the negroes who belong to the white people. And he must not allow the Indian negroes to mix with them. Tell him I am sending to Cuba for bloodhounds to trail them, and I intend to hang every one of them who does not come in."

If the negroes, who appear to have controlled the Indians, had quietly suffered themselves to be trailed with blood hounds, or to be hanged for their love of liberty, they would have well deserved to be slaves. Another important piece of intelligence we have here also. The expenditure of \$5,000 for blood hounds in Cuba was not as he had supposed, for the purpose of trailing Indians. In this letter we have it officially announced, that they were sent for and obtained for the purpose of catching fugitive slaves. I desire the people of this nation to understand distinctly that they are taxed for the purpose of maintaining and supporting slavery in the slave States: that their treasure has been appropriated directly and publicly to that purpose; that our army—many of whose officers and soldiers were bred in the free States, and in love of liberty—has been employed by the commanding General, in pursuing and capturing fugitive slaves. Nor is this all. The freemen of the North are taxed for the purpose of buying blood hounds to act in concert with our army, in this degrading and disgusting warfare.

The taking fugitive slaves is regarded, by Northern people, as a most ignominious employment; so much so, that scarcely a man can be found who will do it publicly. Yet, it seems that our military officers in Florida were openly engaged in it.

I will call the attention of this committee to that portion of Gen. Jessup's order which fastens upon the people of this nation the character of slaveholders, and the purchasers of slaves; "by which this nation, boasting of its liberty and its regard for equal rights, became a dealer in human flesh." I refer to that portion of the order which declares the slaves to be "taken on account of the government and held subject to the order of the Secretary of War." On the 24th of September, 1837, Gen. Jessup wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, saying, "the Seminole negroes are now all the property of the public. I have promised Abraham the freedom of his family if he prove faithful to us; and I shall certainly hang him if he be not faithful."

Mr. Chairman, I think the people of my district will be slow to admit that General Jessup possessed the constitutional power, or the right,

to make them slaveholders. Some of them, I am sure, will disclaim all title to these slaves, and like Gen. Taylor, will refuse to have any concern or connexion with this transaction. They will I am confident, deny the right of General Jessup, or of the honorable Secretary of War, to pay out their money, for the purchase of slaves. Nor do I believe they will admit the justice or honor of selling the freedom of a man's family for the purchase of his fidelity, as promised by General Jessup to Abraham. If I understand the letter referred to, this Abraham was taken into the service of the Government, for the purpose of acting as a pilot to lead our men to the habitations of other blacks, for the purpose of taking more slaves and Indians. If he proved faithful to our troops and a traitor to his own kindred friends, then his wife and children—the objects of his affection—were to have their freedom, but if he refused to betray his own people, he was to be hanged and his family enslaved. Sir, I know not how other gentlemen view this transaction, but I am free to declare that it does not comport with my own views of honor or justice.

But, sir, where are those slaves? Are they set at liberty, or have they been sold into slavery? The purchase was certainly a very extraordinary transaction, and one that will excite inquiry. The slaves remained at Fort Pike for many months. And if I had time, I would read to the committee a curious correspondence respecting their being employed in such a manner as to earn their living, and the like, but I will not detain the committee for that purpose.

The manner in which they were to be finally disposed of seems to have created some uneasiness with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. In a letter addressed to the acting Secretary of War, dated May 1, 1838, speaking of the purchase of these slaves, he says: "I would respectfully suggest whether there are not other objections to the purchase of these negroes by the United States.—It seems to me, that a proposition to Congress to appropriate money to pay for them, and their transportation to Africa, could its authority for that course be obtained, or for any other disposition of them would occasion great and extensive excitement. Such a relation assumed by the United States, for however laudable an object, would, it appears, place the country in no enviable attitude, especially at this juncture, when the public mind, here and elsewhere, is so sensitive upon the subject of slavery."—Sir, I fully agree with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. This purchase of slaves by General Jessup, and sanctioned by the honorable Secretary of war, has placed the country in no enviable attitude; it has tarnished our national honor, and deeply wounded the feeling of the North. But this suggestion as to the propriety of the purchase, was made on the first of May, 1838, and, on the 24th of September previous, Gen. Jessup, writing to Capt. B. L. Bonneville, commanding the Choctaw warriors, says, in addition to their pay as soldiers, they (the Choctaws) will have all the Seminole property they capture. And those Indians (the Seminoles) are rich in horses and negroes. The

Creek warriors received between 14 and 15,000 dollars for their captures." Yet it seems that, some eight months after the date of this letter, showing that the Creek warriors had then received their pay, the propriety of the purchase was doubted. I think, however, that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs had good reason to suppose that some excitement might arise from this transaction, by which you and I, and our constituents, as a portion of the people of this nation, became "slaveholders," and purchasers of our fellow men.

At page 74 of the document last cited, is a list of the Seminole negroes who were sent to Tampa Bay, after being received as "public property," by order of General Jessup, at the price of eight thousand dollars. This list contains the name, age, sex, and description of each person. I should like to present it to the people of the free States, as a sample of the manner in which the slave trade is carried on under color of this Florida war. But as the list is of great length, I beg leave to give an extract only. It is in the following form:

NAME.	AGE.	SEX.	REMARKS
Ben,	5 years,	Male,	Son of Elsy.
Molly,	3 years,	Female,	Daughter of Elsy.
Judy,	1 year,	Female,	Daughter of Elsy.

This short extract contains the names of three children, apparently of one family, and less than six years of age. These children were purchased by our officers as "public property." Sir, what do our people of the free States, or of the civilized world, think of this kind of "Government chattels?" I have no doubt that many a Northern lady will inquire for the mother of those children? This question I cannot answer. I find in the list the name of Elsy, aged twenty years said to be the daughter of Fanny. I should judge that she was not the mother of the children; but such may be the case. I am led to believe that both father and mother escaped the fangs of the blood hounds and the slave catchers.

But the question recurs, where are those slaves? I have for more than a month, had a resolution lying in my drawer, calling on the Secretary of War, for information respecting them; but to this hour I have had no opportunity of offering it in the regular course of business, and I felt no hopes of success by offering it at any other time. It may not have been observed by many members, that in the last session of the late Congress, a petition was presented to this House from a Mr. Watson, in which he states that in May, 1837, he purchased these same negroes, captured by the Creek warriors, of their agent, and paid for them \$14,600. and he gives pretty good evidence to sustain his statement.

This occurred in May, '38, while the order of General Jessup, receiving them as public property was in September previous, and the confirmation of that order was on the 7th of October, prior to the time of Watson's apparent purchase. General Jessup's letter to Col. Warren, saying that these warriors had received between fourteen and fifteen thousand dollars, bears date on the 17th of October, prior to Watson's supposed purchase. It will be borne in mind that these are official docu-

ments, transmitted at the time of their dates. There is also a curious coincidence in regard to price. Gen. Jessup said, in October, 1837, that these warriors had then received "between fourteen and fifteen thousand dollars." And Watson says, and gives good evidence to prove that he paid these same warriors \$14,600, in May following. Now, if these Indians got twice paid for those slaves, they were more fortunate in slave trading than they ever were in any other transaction with the white people.

Another singular circumstance I will mention. On the 1st of May, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs suggested to the Secretary of War, that for the United States to assume the relation of slaveholders, might create extensive excitement, particularly as the public mind here and elsewhere was so sensitive on the subject of slavery; while Watson's bill of sale bears date only eight days afterwards. On the 9th of May, the Commissioner on Indian Affairs requests of the Secretary of War an order for the officer at Fort Pike to deliver these negroes to N. F. Collins, agent for the Creeks warriors, while, from other communications, one would think that the United States never had owned negroes, although they were taken into possession of, our troops on the 6th of September, 1837, and kept at the public expense, until, after the supposed purchase by Watson.

Sir, this transaction is shrouded in mystery. I have read to the committee a portion of its history; but the whole, I think, is not communicated by the documents before us. I have an opinion, and I express it as an opinion, founded on official papers, it is true, but it is nevertheless the conclusion of my own mind in regard to the matter. I then suppose that after the purchase of Gen. Jessup, on the 6th of September, and the sanction by the Secretary of War, on the 7th of October, 1837, and after keeping these negroes at the expense of the public for eight months, and transporting them to Fort Pike, the honorable Secretary began to entertain doubts whether the public would justify the transaction. He probably felt that my friend here from Vermont, (Mr. Slade,) or the gentleman from New York over the way, (Mr. Gates,) might not remain entirely silent, "when" (to use the words of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs) "the public mind here and elsewhere is so sensitive upon the subject of slavery;" especially as it was ascertained that there must be an appropriation of money by Congress for the funds that would seem to have been paid long previously. Difficulties appear to have beset him on every side, and I think his feelings were well expressed in a letter to Gen. Arbuckle, dated July 21st, 1838, in which, speaking of this transaction, he says, in very emphatic language, "the whole affair is a delicate and a difficult one." Just at this time, Mr. Watson, being at this city, was, it appears from his statements, persuaded by the officers of Government to purchase the negroes, being fully assured that the Indian title was good and valid. The contract was accordingly made, as it appears, with the agent of the Creek warriors; by which he, Watson, paid the \$14,600, and relieved the honorable Secretary

from his embarrassment, and the nation from the purchase made by Gen. Jessup. The purchase was effected in "this market," with the approbation of the high officers of State, and in the midst of a Christian community.

Now, sir, in order that I may be understood, I will leave the purchase and sale of the slaves for a moment, and ask the patience of the committee while I relate the brief story of their travels and peregrinations. They were sent from Florida immediately after the order of the 6th of September, 1837, to Fort Pike near New Orleans. Here some sixty of them were detained by a pretended claim, set up by persons living in Georgia, who insisted that this "public property" was their own proper goods and chattels; while Gen. Gaines, who appeared better versed in the law of nations and the military code than he is in the slave trade, boldly claimed them "as prisoners of war." Yes, Mr. Chairman, these negroes, declared by one commanding general to be "the property of the public," were boldly asserted by another to be "prisoners of war." In the mean time, a Lieutenant Reynolds was deputed to conduct the emigrating Indians to their home west of the Mississippi. Among the Seminoles were these slaves, who had been the subjects of capture and purchase, yet remaining at Fort Pike, all under the charge of Lieut. Reynolds. To him Mr. Collins, agent for the Creek warriors, and acting, as Watson says, for him, also attended by Watson's brother, applied to get possession of the negroes, and presented the order of the Secretary of War for their delivery to Collins. There is some difference in the relation of Collins and that of Lieut. Reynolds. Mr. Watson says distinctly that Gen. Gaines and Lieut. Reynolds both refused to obey the order of the honorable Secretary to deliver over the negroes. General Gaines appears to have declared them "prisoners of war," and ordered them to be sent to the place assigned the Seminoles west of the Mississippi; and Lieut. Reynolds, punctilious in the discharge of his military duty, "took the responsibility," and started on his way with Indians and negroes, both slaves and freemen. He landed his charge at Little Rock, in Arkansas, to which place he was followed or attended by Collins; who, faithful to his trust, determined to get the negroes. At that place he again demanded them of Lieut. Reynolds. But a difficulty now interposed, for that officer had not military force sufficient to hold the Indians in subjection, if irritated by an attempt to deliver over the negroes to Collins, to be brought back as slaves to the white people. He therefore called upon the Governor of Arkansas for troops to enable him to effect that object. But Gov. Roane, thinking the safety of the people of his State more important than the slave trade, refused all military aid, and required Lieut. Reynolds to proceed forthwith on his way to the territory assigned to the Indians. In his answer to Lieut. Reynolds, he says: "Had the Government intended to dispose of these negroes to the Creek warriors, it should have been done so in Florida, and not bring Indians and negroes to Arkansas, the vicinity of their future residence, and irritate the Indians to mad-

ness, and turn them loose upon our frontier, when we have no adequate protection. The massacre of our citizens would be the inevitable consequence."—"Your immediate departure will insure peace and avert the outrages you had such good cause to expect."

Thus, Mr. Chairman, you see that we were brought to the very verge of a war west of the Mississippi, by reason of the efforts of our officers to maintain slavery and the slave trade. But Collins, who, so far as the public documents speak of him, was the agent of the Creek warriors, now applied to these same Creek warriors for possession of the negroes. This, sir, is another curiosity. The negroes were taken west among the very Indians who originally captured them, and in whose name the Government officers and Collins were trying to obtain possession of them. But these warriors, having received the \$14,600 in "the better currency," showed no disposition to interfere any further. Indeed, they said that they had sold the negroes, and that the United States had possession of them, and that the Creeks were under no obligation to interfere any further in the business. But Collins, ever faithful to his trust, remained in that country, and a correspondence took place between him and the honorable Secretary of War, and other officers of Government, in regard to the measures to be adopted in order to get these negroes back into slavery. Orders were sent to Gen. Arbuckle, and councils of the Indians were called; the Indians, however, showed but little disposition to aid their white brethren in enslaving those who had gained their liberty by such a concatenation of circumstances. In short, sir, they showed almost as much insensibility to the claims of our slaveholders, as our more civilized friend, John Bull, has so often evinced; excepting, always, that the Indians civilly answered all questions on the subject, while I believe the British Government has never condescended even to hold any correspondence whatever for delivering up fugitive slaves. But, sir, while the Indians appeared thus insensible to the appeals made to them in behalf of slavery, the negroes appeared perfectly callous to all entreaties. The Indians would not deliver up, and the negroes appeared to have become suddenly impressed with the belief that they could take care of themselves. They now felt themselves restored to that liberty, of which they had so long been unjustly deprived. Indeed, it appears that the negroes were thoroughly convinced of the perfect safety and propriety of "immediate emancipation and of Western colonization." They, at all events, appeared determined to give the world some practical demonstrations on these subjects; and, sir, I believe they are yet carrying out their determination.

Thus you see, Mr. Chairman, that the efforts of our honorable Secretary of War, and of other officers of Government, failed to bring those negroes back to a state of slavery, and the agents of Watson were compelled to return the negroes.

But, in the mean time, Mr. Watson's money was gone, and the negroes were gone also. He had bought the negroes, as he says, upon the assurance title held out to him by the officers of Go-

vernment. These officers had exerted their utmost skill to get the negroes for him, but all had failed; and Mr. Watson then applied to Congress for his loss. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the honorable Secretary of War both recommended the claim to the favorable consideration of Congress, and urge us to make the appropriation. Of the propriety of doing so, I shall say nothing at this time. I hope to do my duty on that subject when it comes before us. My object now is to show the manner in which the officers of this government have attempted, not only to make us, in our national character, slaveholders, and slave traders, but to make the freemen of the North pay this purchaser for slaves which he could not catch. I will beg leave to give the opinion of the Commissioner of Indian affairs, in his own words. In a letter to the honorable Secretary of War, dated July 1, 1840, speaking of these negroes, he says: "Any attempt at enforcing a claim to them under the Creek warriors, would perhaps have resulted in a conflict; and, as the hazard of such an issue prevented the use of more than persuasive means, I think Gen. Watson has a just claim on the United States for the money he paid, and interest."

This, sir, is the logic of the Commissioner of Indian affairs, and that same opinion is endorsed by the honorable Secretary of War. I have stated, and I think have shown from authentic documents, that the war in Florida originated in attempts by our Executive officers to support and maintain slavery; that it has been renewed and carried on for that purpose; that the money of our nation has been paid for the purchase of fugitive slaves and of Indian slaves. To these I now add the fact that those officers deem it just that we should pay for slaves which the owners cannot obtain.

When I obtained the floor, I intended to have called the attention of the committee to the manner in which this war was renewed after Gen. Macomb's treaty of peace in 1839. But I have already detained the committee too long, and I will only say, that if the public papers are to be accredited, the people of Florida held meetings for the purpose of protesting against the treaty, for the reason that it permitted the Indians to remain in Florida; and they urged that the territory occupied by them would afford a harbor for run-

way slaves. Of course the war was renewed, and continues, and like a mighty maelstrom, draws within its vortex, and swallows up the immense resources of the nation. For a period almost equal to that of our revolutionary war, the people of the Northern States have been taxed for the purpose of carrying on this contest, directed principally against the fugitive slaves in Florida. To this war the feelings, the principles, the interests, the honor of the free States are opposed; yet, sir, they have been, and still are compelled to furnish means for its prosecution. Revolting as the trading in slaves is to the feeling of our northern people, they have been constrained to supply the means of purchasing their fellow beings. Holding, as the people of the North do, "these truths to be self-evident, that man is born free, and is endowed by his Creator with the inalienable right of liberty," they have been obliged to furnish money to pay for the recapture and re-enslaving of those who, fleeing from the power that oppressed them, had sought in the wilds of Florida those rights to which, by the laws of nature and of nature's God, they were entitled.

Sir, I am anxious to see a period put to those abuses of Northern rights. I desire to see this war terminated at the earliest possible moment; but I fear it will not be accomplished by the method proposed by the gentleman from South Carolina. My own opinion is, that all attempt to remove the Indians and leave the negroes will prove abortive. We are told that the negroes control the Indians. With those negroes, an unconditional surrender to us would be a voluntary separation from their relatives and families and slavery for life. They will probably prefer death to such an alternative. Of course the war will continue until the murder of those people by our army shall proclaim peace to Florida, who refuses peace upon other terms. For one, I am prepared to send all who will surrender themselves as prisoners of war, to the western country, under the pledged faith of this nation to protect them in the enjoyment of their lives, their liberty, and their domestic relations; and for that purpose I have prepared an amendment, which I now send to the Chair.

"Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiato?
Parturiunt montes; nascetur ridiculus mus."